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SANSKRIT EVIDENCE FOR THE PRESENCE OF ARABS,
JEWS, AND PERSIANS IN WESTERN INDIA : CA. 700-1300

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Arab traders had sailed to India for centuries before the rise of Islam, and were undoubtedly members of the Yavana communities that flourished on the Western coast of India in the early centuries of the Christian era¹. One indication of the continuation of this trade by Muslims in the seventh century is the version of the events leading up to the conquest of Sind in 711 found in the *Ta'rikh al-Sind* composed by Muḥammad Ma'sūm in the 1590's. In this account, the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685-705) is said to have sent ships belonging to Syrian merchants to (Western) India to purchase female slaves and rich stuffs ; on their return, they put in at Daybul, the port of the *Brāhmaṇa* king of Sind, Dahar, only to be siezed by pirates. A rival account, in the earlier *Chachnāma*, states that the ship carried gifts from the king of Ceylon, and that on board were Muslim women making a pilgrimage to Mecca.² Obviously, if this second version of the story is true, there were already Muslim communities in Ceylon or Western India in the late seventh century.

But, the earliest Sanskrit records of Muslims from Western India date from the 730's. Two copper plate grants of the Gurjura ruler of Bhṛgukaccha (modern Broach), Jayabhāṭa IV, state that the ruler defeated the Tājīkas in the city of the lord of Valabhī. The first of these plates, found at Kāvī in the Jambūsara Taluka of Broach District, is dated 22 June 736³; the second, whose find-spot is unknown, is dated 9 October 736⁴. The use of the term Tājīka for Arab (or Muslim) is of interest; it is derived from the Pahlavī Tāzīg, from the name of the Arab tribe, Ṭayyī', and demonstrates that the Indians first learned of the Arabs from the Iranians as their name for the Greeks, Yavana (from Old Persian Yauna), demonstrates the same process. The Arab attack on Valabhī (modern Vala in the Bhavanagara District in Saurāṣṭra), the capital of the Maitrakas, is usually associated with the raids organized by al-Junayd ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Murri, the governor of Sind under the Caliph Hishām (724-743).⁵ The history

1 Pingree, D., *The Yavanjātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, HOS 48, Cambridge, Mass. 1978. Some of the material discussed in this paper is referred to by A. Ghosh and R. S. Avasthy, "References to Muhammadans in Sanskrit Inscriptions in Northern India—A.D. 730 to 1720", *Journal of Indian History* 15, 1936, pp. 161-184, and 16, 1937 pp. 24-26.

2 Lambrick, H. T., *Sind Before the Muslim Conquest*, Hyderabad-Sind 1973, p. 183.

3 *CII*, vol. 4, pp. 96-102.

4 *CII*, vol. 4, pp. 102-109.

5 *E.g.*, by Virji, K. J., *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, Bombay, 1955, p. 95.

of these raid is given by al-Balādhurī⁶. Al-Junayd sent officers to Marmad, al-Mandal (perhaps Maṇḍali, modern Maṇḍal in Saurāṣṭra⁷), Dahanj (perhaps Dahaka, modern Dhaka⁸), and Barūṣ (Bhṛgukaccha or Bharukaccha, modern Broach). These places apparently all lay within the Maitraka territory,⁹ and this raid was perhaps the one which included the attack on Valabhī which was repulsed with the aid of Jayabhata IV, the Gurjara feudatory of the Maitraka Emperor Śīlāditya IV; the raid on Bhṛgukaccha, Jayabhata's capital, may have been in part motivated by a desire for revenge. Al-Balādhurī continues with references to the Arab army's proceeding to Uzayn (Ujjayinī, modern Ujjain), and Ḥabīb ibn Marra's expedition to al-Mālaya or al-Mālaba (Mālava, the area of which Ujjayinī was the capital; modern Mālwa), and his raids on Uzayn and Baharīmad. This invasion (or these two invasions) of Mālava presumably originated from Bhṛgukaccha; if this is so, it (or they) must be dated after 736, when Jayabhata IV was still ruling in that city. Indeed, the Arab overthrow of the Gurjaras of Bhṛgukaccha is referred to next by al-Balādhurī when he reports that al-Junayd conquered al-Bīlamān (perhaps Bhīllamāla, modern Bhīmal in Jodhpur, Rājasthān, the capital of the Cāvoṭakas) and al-Jurz (the Gurjaras).¹⁰

The Arabs were repulsed from Mālava and its capital, Ujjayinī, by the Gurjara-Pratihāra ruler, Nāgabhaṭa I; an inscription of his powerful successor, Bhoja (ca 836-882), records the fact that Nāgabhaṭa crushed the armies of the powerful Mleccha ("foreign"=Muslim) king.¹¹ The Cāhamāna ruler of Bhṛgukaccha and feudatory of Nāgāvaloka (= Nāgabhaṭa I), Bhartṛvaḍḍha II, made a grant dated 756,¹² by which time the Gurjara-Pratihāra had already driven the Arab from Broach.

An attempt by the Arabs in early 739 or one of the two preceding years to move south of Bhṛgukaccha through Lāṭadeśa into the Koṅkaṇa had been stopped by Pulakeśin, a Gurjara Cālukya subordinate to the Cālukya Emperor Vikramāditya II (ca. 734-747); his inscription,¹³ dated 21 October 739, states

6 Al-Balādhurī, *Futuḥ al-buldān*, Cairo 1959, pp. 429-430.

7 Virji, p. 306.

8 Virji, p. 297.

9 Other identifications of some of these places are found in, for example, Virji, p. 95 (quoting R. C. Majumdar), and Puri, B. N., *The History of the Gurjara-Pratihāras*, Bombay 1957, p. 22, n. 2.

10 If al-Junayd performed the feats attributed to him by al-Balādhurī, he could not have been succeeded by Tamīm ibn Zayd al-'Utbi in 726 as reported by Mirashi (CII, vol. 4, p. lvi). If the date 726 is correct, then some later governor of Sind must have been responsible for the raids referred to in the Sanskrit inscriptions and in the *Futuḥ al-buldān*.

11 Majumdar, R. C., "The Gwalior *Prasasti* of the Gurjara-Pratihāra King Bhoja," *EI* 18, 1925-26, 99-114.

12 Vallabhaji, G., *Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat*, 3 vols., Bombay 1938-1942, vol. 3, pp. 229-234.

13 CII, vol. 4, pp. 137-145.

that he had defeated the army of the Tājikas at Navasārikā (modern Navsārī, some twelve miles south of Surat) after it had destroyed the Saindhava (feudatories of the Maitrakas in western Saurāṣṭra; the family originated in Sind), Kaccbella (from Kaccha), Saurāṣṭra (the Maitrakas), Cāvoṭaka (ruling from Bhillamāla), Maurya (probably Dhavala or Dhavalātman, a Maurya king whose inscription, found at Kanaswa, Kotah, Rājasthān, is dated 738¹⁴), Gurjara (Jayabhata IV, the Gurjara ruler of Bhṛgukaccha), and other kings. The Arab expedition evidently followed (presumably without knowledge), the more victorious route of conquest used by the Karddamaka Śakas in the period from 130 to 150¹⁵.

Pulakeśin's victory in 739 and Nāgabhaṭa's ejection of the Arabs from Bhṛgukaccha did not end the Muslim raids on the remnants of the Maitraka Empire.¹⁶ Two Jaina legends concerning the fall of Valabhī connect that event with the Mlecchas and the Yavanas respectively¹⁷; and a similar story involving a Mleccha army is given by Rājaśekhara in his *Prabandhakośa*¹⁸. Rājaśekhara gives the date of the sack of Valabhī as Vikrama Saṃvat 375 (= A.D. 318); H. G. Shastri has plausibly suggested that the error arose from Rājaśekhara's understanding Vikrama Saṃvat 845 (= A.D. 788), which must be close to the real date of the fall of the Maitrakas,¹⁹ as Vīra Saṃvat 845 (= Vikrama Saṃvat 375).²⁰ The date Vikrama Saṃvat 845 is also given by Jinaprabha Sūri in his *Vividhatīrthakalpa*; he names the conqueror Hammīra (Amīr).²¹ The first three Jaina stories include a man named Raṅka and gold-making; the same elements appear in the version related by al-Bīrūnī, who adds that the destroyer of Valabhī was the lord of al-Manṣūra that is, the Arab governor of Sind.²²

14 Sircar, D. C., "Fragmentary Maurya Inscription from Mathura," *EI* 32, 1957-58, 207-212, esp. 210.

15 Pingree, vol. 1, p. 14.

16 It is frequently claimed (e.g. by Virji, pp. 99-100) that al-Balādhurī (p. 431) refers to an invasion of Gujarāt in the following account. The Caliph al-Manṣūr (754-775) appointed Hishām ibn 'Amr governor of Sind, and he sent 'Amr ibn Jamal in boats to Nārand. Nārand is read by these scholars Bārada (!), which they identify with Bardia near Porbandar in Saurāṣṭra. An inscription found at Ghumli mentions that the Saindhava ruler of that region of Saurāṣṭra, Agguka I, rescued his country from an enemy naval force. The identification of that enemy with the Arabs sent to Nārand-Bārada is far from certain.

17 *Purāṇanaprabandhasaṅgraha*, ed. Jinavijaya Muni, Calcutta 1939, pp. 82-83.

18 *Prabandhakośa* of Rājaśekhara Sūri, ed. Jinavijaya, Śāntiniketan 1935, p. 23.

19 Virji, p. 102, points out that the Maitrakas were no longer ruling when Jinasena wrote his *Harivaṃśa* in 783.

20 Reported in M. R. Majmudar, ed. *Historical and Cultural Chronology of Gujarat*, Baroda 1960, p. 317.

21 *Vividhatīrthakalpa* of Jinaprabha Sūri, ed. Jinavijaya, Śāntiniketan 1934, p. 29.

22 Al-Bīrūnī, *Tahqīq mā li al-Hind*, Hyderabad-Deccan 1958, pp. 152-153; Alberuni's

The next incident that involves Sanskrit references to Muslims on the western coast of India occurred at Sañjāna, a coastal town in the Thānā District, some 90 miles north of Bombay. If this town is the ancient Sañjāyapura Ptolemy's Σαγα'vτιον ?), it was the center of a Yavana settlement in the early fourth century A.D.²³ According to Pārsī tradition, refugees fleeing after the overthrow of Yazdijird III in ca. 652 wandered for 100 years in the mountainous district of Khurāsān, settled for fifteen years in the island of Hurmuz, then for nineteen years on the island of Diu near the southern coast of Saurāṣṭra, and then transferred to Sañjāna, where they were received by the local *rajā*, Jādī Rāna or Jāy Rāna. This tradition is preserved in a Persian poem, the *Qissa-i Sañjān*, composed by Bahman Kaykobād Hurmuzdyār Sanjānā in 969 Yazdijird (1599/1600 A.D.),²⁴ and is repeated in the *Qissa i Zartushtiyān-i Hindūstān va Bayān-i Ātash Bahrām-i Nawsārī* composed by Shapurji Manockji Sanjana at the end of the eighteenth century.²⁵ The chronology of this tradition would place the arrival of the Pārsīs at Sañjāna in ca. 785, through many other dates for that event have been proposed, of which the most convincing is 936.²⁶ The controversy concerning the date of the advent of the Pārsīs, however, does not affect the fact that Pārsīs at some time before ca. 950 had settled in western India. In a cave at Kanheri (just north of Bombay) were found two Pahlavī inscriptions²⁷; the first, dated 368 Yazdajird (999/1000 A.D.), names seventeen Iranians, the second, dated 390 Yazdajird (1021/1022 A.D.), lists ten more, of whom four were listed in the first record. Moreover, it has often been claimed that the word *hamyamana* or *hamjamana* that occurs in several Śīlāhāra grants dated between 988 and 1127 is derived from the Avestan *hanjamana*, meaning "assembly", and refers to the Pārsīs.²⁸ It has, however, been pointed out that

23 Pingree, vol. 1, p. 20, fn. 65; cf. p. 4.

24 Modi, J. J., "The Ancient Name of Sanjān," *Asiatic Papers*, Bombay 1905, pp. 201-216.

25 Modi, J. J., "Qisseh-i Zartūsthiān-i Hindūstān va Bayān-i Ātash Behrām-i Naosari," *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* 17, 1930, 1-63; 19, 1931, 45-57; and 25, 1933, 1-147.

26 Taraporewala, J. S., "The Exact Date of the Arrival of the Parsis in India," *Volume of Studies in Indology, Presented to Prof. P. V. Kane*, Poona 1941, pp. 506-514. Taraporewala, pp. 512-513, is mistaken in accepting the view that the inscription of the Śīlāhāra Anantadeva I dated 1081 mentions the "Kharāsān Maṇḍali" or territory of Khurāsānian Pārsīs; see *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 113-115.

27 Taraporewala, p. 512. The young Pārasika men and women who are said to have sung the praises of the Cola Kulottuṅga I (1070-1120) from the further side of the ocean lived not in Sañjāna, but in Iran. Hultzsch, E., "Four Inscriptions of Kulottunga-Chola," *EI* 5, 1898-99, 103-106, esp. 103-104; Bhandarkar, D. R., "Parasikas," *M. P. Khareghat Memorial Volume*, vol. 1, Bombay 1953, pp. 196-203, esp. pp. 199-200.

28 Modi, "The Ancient Name," pp. 209-215. The inscriptions known to me to contain this word are the Paṭṭanakuḍi Plates of Avasara II (?) (18 October 988; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 178-183); the Thānā Plates of Arikesarin (6 November 1017; *CII*, vol. 6, p. 44-54); the Bhāṇḍup Plates of Chittarāja (30 October 1026; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 54-60); the Dauli Plates of

hamyamana is a Kannaḍa word meaning "artisan".²⁹

Epigraphic evidence regarding the presence of Muslims in Sañjāna in the tenth century was discovered some twenty-five years ago. This occurs in a grant of a Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch, Indra III (915-928), found at the seaport town, Chiñchaṇī, in the Thāṇā District of Mahārāṣṭra.³⁰ It is well known that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas are the Balharā (Vallabharājas) of the Arab geographers, who are described as being friendly with the Muslims. Authors such as al-Iṣṭakhri even state that some of the coastal cities of the Balharā—he names Kanbāya (Cambay), Sūbāra (Sopārā), Sandān (Sañjāna), and Ṣaymūr (Sanskrit Cemūlya: Chaul in Kolābā District)—not only include Muslims among their inhabitants and possess mosques, but that these Muslims are ruled by Muslims on behalf of the Balharā.³¹ This statement is amplified by the Chiñchaṇī inscription, which records that Sugatipa (in Sanskrit this word—which is not a proper name—means "lord of the virtuous"; perhaps it is a Sanskritization of the Turkish Sebuktigin or Subuktigin), whose other name was Madhumati (in Sanskrit this means "sweet-minded"; it is apparently a Sanskritization of Muḥammad), the son of Sahiyārahāra (Shāhriyār), was a *nṛpati* (*rāja*) belonging to a Tājika family and the recipient of the entire territory of Saṃyāna (Sañjāna) from Kṛṣṇa II (878-915), and that he endorsed, with the permission of Indra III, the endowment of a temple of the goddess Bhagavatī Daśamī at Saṃyāna by the *Brāhmaṇa* Annaiya, a friend of the Arab king's minister, Puvvaiya, on 17 April 926. Incidentally, this, a Rāṣṭrakūṭa grant, seems to be the earliest Sanskrit inscription to refer to the hamyamanas.

Though the Tājika Madhumati or Sugatipa was the governor of Sañjāna for the Rāṣṭrakūṭas from about 900/910 till at least 926, the Arab local political dominance did not long survive. Even had they maintained their position under the remaining Rāṣṭrakūṭas the last of these, Karka II, was overthrown in 973; and a grant made by the Śīlāhāra Aparājita on 20 August 993 asserts that he had taken over Saṃyāna and other territories when the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Empire fell.³²

Plates of Chittarāja (5 April 1034; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 64-71); the Chiñchaṇī Plate of Chittarāja (15 September 1034; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 71-75); the Thāṇā Plate of Nāgārjuna (27 August 1039; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 75-82); the Thāṇā Plates of Mummuṇirāja (20 February 1049; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 82-98); the Prince of Wales Museum Plates of Mummuṇirāja (15 August 1049; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 98-106); the Khārepāṭaṇ Plates of Anantadeva I (9 January 1095; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 115-120); and the Vaḍavali Grant of Aparāditya I (21 October 1127; *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 12-127). They are also mentioned in the Chiñchaṇī Grant of the Moḍha Vijala (13 November 1053; *EI*, 32, 1957/58, 71-78).

²⁹ *CII*, vol. 6, p. 58, fn. 8.

³⁰ Sircar, D. C., "Rashtrakuta Charters from Chinchani." *EI* 32, 1957-58, 45-60, esp. 45-55.

³¹ Al-Iṣṭakhri, *Al-masālik wa al-mamālik*, ed. M. S. Ghurbāl, Cairo 1961, p. 102. Much the same information is found in Ibn Hawqal's *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, Bayrūt (N.D.), p. 277.

³² *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 17-28.

However, Arab merchants continued to thrive at Sañjāṇa. For Cāmuṇḍarāja, the governor of Saṃyānapattana under the Śilāhāra Chittarāja, granted an oil-mill to the temple of Bhagavatī at Saṃyāna on 15 September 1034 ;³³ among the persons whom he addresses in this grant are the merchants Alliyā (‘Alī), Mahara (Mihr), and Mahumata (Muḥammad). One may here remark that this same temple of Bhagavatī at Sañjāṇa that was mentioned by Sugatipa and by Cāmuṇḍarāja was referred to in a grant of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III (939-967) along with a temple of Viṣṇu erected by descendants of the merchants of Bhilla-māla³⁴; the *praśasti* of Kṛṣṇa III describes him as being obeyed by, among others, the Tajjikas and the Pārasīkas—presumably the Muslim and Pārsī merchant communities along the western coast of India.

The Pārasīkas are also regularly mentioned in the inscriptions of the Western Cālukyas in a verse extolling Vinayāditya (678/9 or 681-696), who is said to have been the overlord of the rulers of the islands Kamera or Kavera, Pārasīka, and Siṃhala. The earliest inscription that I know of to include this claim is a grant made by his son, Vijayāditya, on 8 April 700.³⁵ Siṃhaladvīpa seems certainly to be the island of Goa (Gopakadvīpa),³⁶ but the identity of the islands called Kamera and Pārasīka remains obscure. That it is located near Goa is indicated by the *digvijaya* of Yaśovarman of Kānyakubja (Kanauj) (ca. 725-750) given by Vākpati in his *Gauḍavaho*;³⁷ this extended up to the western coast of India from Gokarna, south of Goa (‘the place where Rāvaṇa offered his ten heads to Śiva’) to a confrontation with the Pārasīkas, then through the two Koṅkaṇas to the Narmadā. Thus Pārasīkadvīpa seems to have been a small settlement of Persian merchants somewhere on the coast of Goa or the southern Ratnāgiri District.³⁸ The description of Vinayāditya’s overlordship of the three islands is echoed in an inscription erected by the Kadamba Ṣaṣṭha II at Gaṇaḍevī (on the Ambikā, south of Navasāri in Gujarāt) in 1042; Ṣaṣṭha claims to have conquered the overlords of the islands Siṃhala, Pārasīka, and Kanaka.³⁹

33 CII, vol. 6, pp. 71-75.

34 Sircar, 55-60.

35 Gai, G. S., ‘Mayalur Plates of Chalukya Vijayaditya, Saka 622’, *EI*, 33, 1959-60, 311-314. For other grants issued in the same reign and making the same claim see, e.g., *EI*, 10, 1909-10, 14-17 (703); *EI*, 32, 1957-58, 317-324 (20 June 707); and *EI*, 25, 1939-40, 21-24 (731).

36 CII, vol. 6, pp. 186-187.

37 *The Gauḍavaho*, ed. S. P. Pandit, rev. N. B. Utgikar, Poona 1927, lines 430-470.

38 Bhandarkar, D. R., ‘Parasika Dominion in Ancient India’, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 8, 1926-27, 133-141, esp. 138-139, claims that this Pārasīka island was Sañjāṇa, but this must be rejected because it conflicts with the chronology of the advent of the Pārsīs to India.

39 Gadre, A. S., *Important Inscriptions from the Baroda State*, Baroda 1943, pp. 64-71; on Ṣaṣṭha’s campaigns see also G. M. Moraes, *The Kadamba Kula*, Bombay 1931, pp. 174-175.

In this connection, Kanakadvīpa (" the island of gold ") is probably Kāpardikadvīpa or Kavaḍidvīpa, the northern Koṅkaṇa (the Ṭhāṇā and Kolābā Districts) so named after the Śilāhāra Kapardin I (ca. 800-825), while it is possible that by this time Pārasīkadvīpa refers to Sañjāṇa.

Two other inscriptions of the Kadambas mention an Arab family of some importance in the middle of the eleventh century ; both were composed during the reign of Jayakeśin I, the son of Śaṣṭha II, and were found at Panjim in Goa. The first is known as yet only from a Portuguese translation (not seen by the present writer) and two English summaries thereof.⁴⁰ This records that Jayakeśin authorized his minister, Sadano (so the Portuguese ; evidently an attempt to render Chaḍama, which may represent the Arabic sādin, " custodian "), to collect taxes from ships coming from other ports in order to support a mijigiti (masjid, " mosque ") on 23 April 1053 ; the other ports named, in their Portuguese versions, are Sihalla (Siṃhala ; Ceylon), Callah, Zungavar (Zanzibār), Pandu (Pāṇḍya), Queralla (Kerala), Chandda (Caṇḍa), Ganddo (Gauḍa), Bangalla (Baṅgāla ; Bengal), Gheatta, Gurjara (Gujarāt), Laita (Lāṭa), Pusta, Srytam, and Chandrapur (Chandrapura, a former Kadamba capital ; Chandar in Goa). The same inscription states that Sadano's father, Madumod (Muḥammad), a Taji (Tājika) merchant, had assisted Guhalladeva II, Jayakeśin's grandfather, when the ship on which he was sailing to Somanātha in Saurāṣṭra was forced by a broken mast to put in at Goa.⁴¹ The second inscription records the grant of a village by Jayakeśin to Chaḍama, the son of Madhumada (Muḥammad), the son of Āliyama (' Alī), a *nauvittaka* (" one who earns his living from ships ") belonging to a Tāyika (Tājika) family from Cemūlya (al-Iṣṭakhri's Ṣaymūr), on 5 July 1059.⁴² The word *nauvittaka* also occurs in other grants, including one in which it is the title (" admiral " ?) of an official named Vāsaida ; this grant refers to a raid on the Koṅkaṇa made by the Muna (?) Yavanas (Muslims), perhaps on behalf of the Kadambas of Goa.⁴³ It records the concession by the Śilāhāra Anantadeva I of exemption of customs dues at such ports of the northern Koṅkaṇa as Sthānaka (Ṭhāṇā), Nāgapura (perhaps Nāgāv in the Kolābā District), Śūrpāraka (Sopārā), and Cemūlya (Chaul in the Kolābā District) to two merchant brothers of Balipattana (perhaps Khārepāṭaṇa in the Ratnāgiri District ; though this place is inland, it does lie on a river), Bhābhāṇa and Dhaṇāma, on 9 January 1095. A later in-

40 Moraes, pp. 185-187, and Dikshit, M. G. " Panjim Plates of Jayakesi (I); Śaka 981, " *Indica. The Indian Historical Research Institute Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume*, Bombay 1953, pp. 89-98, esp. 92-93.

41 Moraes, pp. 171-172.

42 Moraes, pp. 394-400, and Dikshit.

43 *CII*, vol. 6, pp. 115-120. The Kadamba ruler was Guhalladeva III, the son of Jayakeśin I; see Moraes, p. 188.

vasion of the Koṅkaṇa by one Chittuka, who is described as an *asura* (demon), was repulsed by the Śilāhāra Aparāditya I, from whom Chittuka fled to take refuge among the Mlecchas (Muslims); this victory is recorded in a grant made by Aparāditya on 21 October 1127.⁴⁴

Thus, the Sanskrit evidence for considerable activity by Muslim and Pārsī traders and communities on the western coast of India between about 700 and 1100 is fairly considerable. But, when our attention turns to the south, to the Malabar coast in Kerala, the epigraphs mentioning western merchants and adventurers virtually cease. Certainly, such huge trading corporation as those following the Vīrabalañjadharma⁴⁵ had close connections with the foreign merchants from Egypt, Arabia, and Iran, but they do not seem to mention these partners in their numerous inscriptions. Therefore, we must be content with a handful of scattered records.

Since the fourth century, there has existed among Christians the legend that St. Thomas travelled to India, and since at least the thirteenth century his activities there have been associated with Mylapore near modern Madras. Regardless of the validity of these legends, there are certain epigraphic remains of Syrian Christians in south India. One inscription, in Pahlavī and naming the Syrians (though containing only a dozen or so words, it has been interpreted in as many ways), is found on six crosses in the region:⁴⁶ in the church on St. Thomas' Mount near Madras, discovered by the Portuguese in ca. 1547; two crosses in the Valiyapalli Church at Koṭṭayam, Travancore, Kerala; in the Kadamarram Church near Kaṭṭayam; in the Roman Catholic Church at Muttasira near Koṭṭayam; and in the Syrian Catholic Church at Alangad, Travancore (this cross is said to have come from Cranganore, Kerala). One of the crosses at Koṭṭayam bears also a Syriac inscription of a passage from *Galatians*. The original date of the Pahlavī inscription is unknown, but most probably falls within our period. The other inscriptions are three copper plate grants in the possession of the Syrian Christians at Koṭṭayam in Kerala.⁴⁷ The earlier two, written in the Vaṭṭeḷuttu script, are dated in the reign of the Cera monarch, Sthāṇu Ravi, who is known to have been a contemporary of the Cola Āditya I (ca. 871-907). The first states that in the fifth year of Sthāṇu Ravi,

44 CII, vol. 6, pp. 120-127.

45 Sundaram, K., "The Balañja Merchant Community of Medieval Andhra (A.D. 1300-1600)", *Journal of Oriental Research, Madras* 30, 1960-61 (1963), 13-27.

46 Anklesaria, B. T., "The Pahlavi Inscription on the Crosses in Southern India," *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* 39, 1958, 64-107.

47 Some bibliography and a description is given by V. Rangacharya, *A Topographical List of the Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency* 3 vols., Madras 1919, vol. 3, pp. 1703-1704; see also L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Dynasties et histoire de l'Inde depuis Kanishka jusqu'aux invasions musulmanes*, Paris 1935, pp. 249-250.

the governor of Veṇāḍu, Aiyaṇaḍigaḷ, granted certain privileges to Iso Tapir and converts to the church called Tariśāppalli at Kurukkeṇi kollam (Quilon, Kerala). The second, a fragment, repeats the first with some additional details, and is signed by witnesses in the Pahlavī, Kūfic, and Hebrew scripts. The third inscription, in the Malayālam and Vaṭṭeḷuttu scripts, is later; it is thought to be dated 1320.

A single epigraph refers to the Jews in south India. This is a copper plate grant in Tamil, dated in the thirty-eighth year of the Cera Bhāskara Ravivarman (ca. 978-1036), granting a village at Muyirikkoḍu (Cranganore or Kranganūr north of Cochin; generally identified with the Greeks' Muziris) to Issuppu Irappān (Joseph Rabbān) and his descendants.⁴⁸ This grant, of which there is also a Hebrew translation, is kept by the Jews of Cochin. Jews, of course have lived in Kerala continuously for many centuries. The "Black" Jews are descended from the earliest immigrants who intermarried with low-caste Dravidians, and the "White" Jews are mostly descended from those who have migrated to India in the last 500 years.⁴⁹ Various authors of the late medieval and early modern periods affirm the existence of colonies of Jews, Christians, and Muslims at a town named Mārāhi or Mādāyi at the mouth of the Killā River near Elimalai (Mt. Delly on English maps), north of Cannanore in the Mālabar District. Mārāhi was allegedly founded by the Mūṣaka (Eli) king Vaḷabha⁵⁰ It is said to contain a tank or reservoir called the Jews' Tank; and there is reported to be an Arabic inscription in its mosque commemorating the mosque's foundation in A.H. 518 (A.D. 1124/25).⁵¹

The only other settlements of foreign merchants on the western coast of India before the end of the thirteenth century are in Gujarāt, including Saurāṣṭra; many of these individuals, however, came overland from Sind, Afghānistān, Rājasthān, the Panjāb, or Mālhwā (including, of course, Maḥmūd of Ghazna), rather than by ship.⁵² There are a number of inscriptions in Sanskrit and Arabic referring to these Muslim merchants that were written during the reigns of the Caulukyas and Vāghelas.⁵³ The most noteworthy of

48 Rangacharya, vol. 3, pp. 1691-1692.

49 Macfarlane, E. W. E., "The Racial Affinities of the Jews of Cochin", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters*, 3, 1937, 1-24.

50 Subrahmanya Aiyer, K. V. "An Unidentified Territory of Southern India", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1922, 161-175.

51 Rangacharya, vol. 2, p. 1042.

52 See, e.g. Sharma, D. "Some New Light on the Route of Maḥmūd Ghaznavi's Raid on Somanātha: Multān to Somanātha and Somanātha to Multān", *Dr. Satkari Mookerji Felicitation Volume*, Varanasi 1969, pp. 165-168, and D. Sharma, "The Nanānā Grant of Alhaṇa, a Feudatory of Kumārapāla Caulukya, V. 1219 and 1220", *Felicitation Volume.....S. K. Belvalkar*, Banaras 1957, pp. 297-303.

53 Majumdar, A. K., *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, Bombay 1956, pp. 331-333, and Desai,

these are the Arabic inscription set up in Cambay to record the construction of a mosque by Sa'id ibn Abū Sharaf ibn 'Alī ibn Shābūr al-Bammī in Muḥarram A.H. 615 (30 March—21 April 1218),⁵⁴ and the Veraval Sanskrit Inscription of Arjunadeva.⁵⁵ This latter record, dated Rasūla Muḥammada Saṃvat 662 as well as in traditional Indian style corresponding to 25 May 1264, refers to the rule of an Amīra Rukanadīna (Rukn al-Dīn) at Hurmuja (Hurmuz) and the construction of a mijigiti (masjid or mosque) at Somanātha by Noradīna Piroja, the son of Khojā Abūvrāhima (Nūr al-Dīn Firūz ibn Khwāja Abū Ibrāhīm). The Arabic version of this inscription, dated 23 July 1264, has recently been identified.⁵⁶ Martial and commercial contacts between the Vāghelās and Muslims are often referred to in the Sanskrit literature produced in the court of the former; especially noteworthy in this regard is the play *Hammīramadamardana* (*Destruction of the Joy of the Amīr*) composed by Jaysimha Sūri between 1223 and 1230.⁵⁷

In conclusion, I should mention that Sanskrit literature composed in western India between 700 and 1300 frequently refers to the goods imported from Arabia and Iran and to the social customs of the Muslims and Pārsīs. It would be impossible to survey this vast material, so I shall remain content to list a few of the many places wherein references to such material appear.⁵⁸ I

Z. A., "Muslims in the 13th Century Gujarat, as known from Arabic Inscriptions", *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 10, 1960-61, 353-364.

54 Siddiqi, W. H., "Religious Tolerance as Gleaned from Medieval Inscriptions", *Proceedings of Seminar on Medieval Inscriptions*, Aligarh 1974, pp. 50-58, esp. 51-53, and Desai, 355. Siddiqi states that this is the oldest Arabic inscription in Gujarat, thereby denying (apparently rightly) the authenticity of that claimed by Majumdar (p. 332) to be dated 24 Rabi 'I A.H. 445 (24 July 1052) and to be found in a mosque in Ahmedabad.

55 Vallabhaji, *Historical Inscriptions*, vol. 3, pp. 58-63; and Sircar, D. C. "Veraval Inscription of Chaulukya-Vaghela Arjuna, 1264 A.D.", *EI* 34, 1961-62, 141-150.

56 Desai, 360-361, and Sircar, 149-150. Other inscriptions mentioned by Desai include those on grave-stones from Cambay dated 1232, 1249, 1284, 1287, and 1291; one at Patan (Aṇahillapattana) dated 1282; and a record of the construction of a mosque at Junagadh in 1286/87.

57 Sandesara, B. J., *Literary Circle of Mahāmātya Vastupāla*, Bombay 1953, pp. 31-32, 36, 38, 78-79, and 122-125. A later story, the *Jagaḍūcarita* of Sarvāpanda, claims that the Jaina merchant, Jagaḍū, built a masīti (masjid) in Bhadreśvarapura in about 1250; see Bühler G. *Indian Studies No. I*, Wien 1892, pp. 18 and 62 (*Jagaḍūcarita* 6. 64).

58 Kane, P. V. "The Pahlavas and Pārasikas in Ancient Sanskrit Literature", *Dr. Modi Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1930, pp. 352-357, esp. 356-357; Agrawala, V. S., "An Old Reference to Persian Oil in Sanskrit Literature", *Indian Culture* 13, 1946-47, 226; Desai, D. *The Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras under the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇi*, Bombay 1951, pp. 293 and 399; Gode, P. K., "Some Distinctive Names of Horses Recorded by Hemacandra in his Abhidhānacintāmaṇi, by Someśvara in his Mānasollāsa and by Jayadatta in his Aśvavaidyaka—between A.D. 1000 and 1200". *Studies in Indian Literary History*, vol. 3, Poona 1956, pp. 172-181 and Chauhan, D., "Arab Horses in India", *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 48-49, 1968, 391-394.

should also note that Indian astronomers and mathematicians of the period were not entirely unfamiliar with the work of Arabic scientists.⁵⁹ In brief, the assembled evidence is not particularly copious, but it is sufficient to establish the general proposition that Western merchants in the early Islamic period continued to play the important role in the economic and social life of West India that they had in the time of the Roman Empire.

Abbreviations

CII : *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*.

Vol. 4 : V. V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era*, Ootacmund 1955.

Vol. 6 : V. V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Śilāhāras*, New Delhi 1971.
EI : *Epigraphia Indica*.

⁵⁹ Pingree, D., "Islamic Astronomy in Sanskrit", *Journal for the History of Arabic Science* 2, 1978, 315-330, esp. 316-318.